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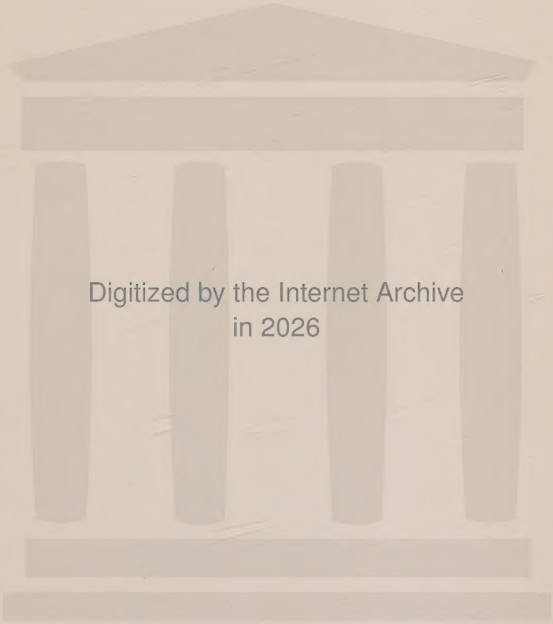
The Cruise of the Mystery, and Other Poems

By

Celia Thaxter

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
Houghton, Mifflin and Company
The Riverside Press, Cambridge
1893

Judge Winn



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HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK.

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AND OTHER POEMS

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The Riverside Press, Cambridge:
Electrotyped and Printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.

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THE CRUISE OF THE MYSTERY.

The children wandered up and down,
Seeking for driftwood o'er the sand;
The elder tugged at granny's gown,
And pointed with his little hand.

"Look! look!" he cried, "at yonder ship
That sails so fast and looms so tall!"
She turned, and let her basket slip,
And all her gathered treasure fall.

"Nay, granny, why are you so pale?
Where *is* the ship we saw but now?"
"Oh, child, it was no mortal sail!
It came and went, I know not how.

"But ill winds fill that canvas white
That blow no good to you and me.
Oh, woe for us who saw the sight
That evil bodes to all who see!"

They pressed about her, all afraid:
"Oh, tell us, granny, what was she?"
"A ship's unhappy ghost," she said,
"The awful ship, the Mystery."

"But tell us, tell us!" "Quiet be!"
She said. "Sit close and listen well,
For what befell the Mystery
It is a fearful thing to tell!"

She was a slave-ship long ago.
Year after year across the sea
She made a trade of human woe,
And carried freights of misery.

One voyage, when from the tropic coast
Laden with dusky forms she came, —

A wretched and despairing host, —
  Beneath the fierce sun's breathless flame

Sprang, like a wild beast from its lair,
  The fury of the hurricane,
And sent the great ship reeling bare
  Across the roaring ocean plain.

Then terror seized the piteous crowd:
  With many an oath and cruel blow
The captain drove them, shrieking loud,
  Into the pitch-black hold below.

Shouting, "Make fast the hatchways tight!"
  He cursed them, "Let them live or die,
They 'll trouble us no more to-night!"
  The crew obeyed him sullenly.

Has hell such torment as they knew?
  Like herded cattle packed they lay,
Till morning showed a streak of blue
  Breaking the sky's thick pall of gray.

"Off with the hatchways, men!" No sound!
What sound should rise from out a grave?
The silence shook with dread profound
The heart of every seaman brave.

"Quick! Drag them up," the captain said,
"And pitch the dead into the sea!"
The sea was peopled with the dead,
With wide eyes staring fearfully.

From weltering wave to wave they tossed.
Two hundred corpses, stiff and stark,
At last were in the distance lost,
A banquet for the wandering shark.

Oh, sweetly the relenting day
Changed, till the storm had left no trace,
And the whole awful ocean lay
As tranquil as an infant's face.

Abaft the wind hauled fair and fine,
Lightly the ship sped on her way;

Her sharp bows crushed the yielding brine
  Into a diamond dust of spray.

But up and down the decks her crew
  Shook their rough heads, and eyed askance,
With doubt and hate that ever grew,
  The captain's brutal countenance,

As slow he paced with frown as black
  As night. At last, with sudden shout,
He turned. "'Bout ship! We will go back
  And fetch another cargo out!"

They put the ship about again;
  His will was law, they could not choose.
They strove to change her course in vain:
  Down fell the wind, the sails hung loose,

And from the far horizon dim
  An oily calm crept silently
Over the sea from rim to rim;
  Still as if anchored fast lay she.

The sun set red, the moon shone white,
On idle canvas drooping drear;
Through the vast, solemn hush of night
What is it that the sailors hear?

Now do they sleep — and do they dream?
Was that the wind's foreboding moan?
From stem to stern her every beam
Quivered with one unearthly groan!

Leaped to his feet then every man,
And shuddered, clinging to his mate;
And sun-burned cheeks grew pale and wan,
Blanched with that thrill of terror great.

The captain waked, and angrily
Sprang to the deck, and cursing spoke.
"What devil's trick is this?" cried he.
No answer the scared silence broke.

But quietly the moonlight clear
Sent o'er the waves its pallid glow:

What stirred the water far and near,
With stealthy motion swimming slow?

With measured strokes those swimmers dread
From every side came gathering fast;
The sea was peopled with the dead
That to its cruel deeps were cast!

And coiling, curling, crawling on,
The phantom troop pressed nigh and nigher,
And every dusky body shone
Outlined in phosphorescent fire.

They gained the ship, they climbed the shrouds,
They swarmed from keel to topmast high;
Now here, now there, like filmy clouds
Without a sound they flickered by.

And where the captain stood aghast,
With hollow, mocking eyes they came,

And bound him fast unto the mast
With ghostly ropes that bit like flame.

Like maniacs shrieked the startled crew:
They loosed the boats, they leaped within.
Before their oars the water flew,
They pulled as if some race to win.

With spectral light all gleaming bright
The Mystery in the distance lay:
Away from that accursed sight
They fled until the break of day.

And they were rescued, but the ship,
The awful ship, the Mystery,
Her captain in the dead men's grip, —
Never to any port came she;

But up and down the roaring seas
For ever and for aye she sails,
In calm or storm, against the breeze,
Unshaken by the wildest gales.

And wheresoe'er her form appears
Come trouble and disaster sore,
And she has sailed a hundred years,
And she will sail forevermore."

SCHUMANN'S SONATA IN A MINOR.

(MIT LEIDENSCHAFTLICHEM AUSDRUCK.)

THE quiet room, the flowers, the perfumed calm,
The slender crystal vase, where all aflame
The scarlet poppies stand erect and tall,
Color that burns as if no frost could tame,
The shaded lamplight glowing over all,
The summer night a dream of warmth and balm.

Outbreaks at once the golden melody,
"With passionate expression!" Ah, from whence
Comes the enchantment of this potent spell,
This charm that takes us captive, soul and sense?
The sacred power of music, who shall tell,
Who find the secret of its mastery?

Lo, in the keen vibration of the air
Pierced by the sweetness of the violin,
Shaken by thrilling chords and searching notes
That flood the ivory keys, the flowers begin
To tremble; 't is as if some spirit floats
And breathes upon their beauty unaware.

The stately poppies, proud in stillness, stand
In silken splendor of superb attire:
Stricken with arrows of melodious sound,
Their loosened petals fall like flakes of fire;
With waves of music overwhelmed and drowned,
Solemnly drop their flames on either hand.

So the rich moment dies, and what is left?
Only a memory sweet, to shut between
Some poem's silent leaves, to find again,
Perhaps, when winter blasts are howling keen,
And summer's loveliness is spoiled and slain,
And all the world of light and bloom bereft.

But winter cannot rob the music so!
Nor time nor fate its subtle power destroy
To bring again the summer's dear caress,
To wake the heart to youth's unreasoning joy, —
Sound, color, perfume, love, to warm and bless,
And airs of balm from Paradise that blow.

BECAUSE OF THEE.

My life has grown so dear to me
Because of thee!
My maiden with the eyes demure,
And quiet mouth, and forehead pure.
Joy makes a summer in my heart
Because thou art!

The very winds melodious be
Because of thee!
The rose is sweeter for thy sake,
The waves in softer music break,
On brighter wings the swallows dart,
Because thou art!

My sky is swept of shadows free
Because of thee!

Sorrow and care have lost their sting,
The blossoms glow, the linnets sing,
All things in my delight have part,
Because thou art!

FLOWERS FOR THE BRAVE.

(DECORATION DAY, 1883.)

HERE bring your purple and gold,
  Glory of color and scent;
Scarlet of tulips bold,
  Buds blue as the firmament.

Hushed is the sound of the fife
  And the bugle piping clear.
The vivid and delicate life
  In the soul of the youthful year

We bring to the quiet dead,
  With a gentle and tempered grief:
O'er the mounds so mute we shed
  The beauty of blossom and leaf.

The flashing swords that were drawn,
No rust shall their fame destroy!
Boughs rosy as rifts of dawn,
Like the blush on the cheek of joy,

Rich fires of the gardens and meads
We kindle, these hearts above!
What splendor can match their deeds?
What sweetness can match our love?

EXPOSTULATION.

Tears in those eyes of blue!
Sparks of fiery dew,
Scornful lightnings that flash
'Twixt dusky lash and lash!
Never from sorrow grew
That rain in my heaven of blue.

Full of disdain are you,
Scorn for these fetters new.
Sweet, you were free too long!
Love is a master strong,
Hard are the words but true,
None may his chain undo.

Nay! Let your heart shine through
And soften those eyes of blue!

Glide from your chilly height,
Banish your anger bright;
Fairest, be gentlest, too,
Fate is too mighty for you!

PERSISTENCE.

Skeleton schooner, looming strange on the
far horizon's rim,
Wasted and blurred by the bitter cold, all
ghastly and pallid and dim,
Whither goest thou, stiff and stark? What
harbor locked in the frost
Steerest thou for, through the freezing spray
by the hissing breakers tossed?

Wherefore strivest thou, fighting still to plough
thy perilous way
Against the might of the fierce northwest so
woefully, night and day?
Turn thee and spread thy wings so white, and
fly to the tropic seas,
Till the clogging ice that loads thee now dis-
solves in a torrid breeze,

Till the blazing sun shall melt the tar in
every rope and seam,
Till thy frozen keel warm tides shall rock in
a languid, lovely dream,
Till thou liest lapped in perfumes sweet in
some palm-girdled bay,
Anchored in peace, to rest at last, for many
a golden day.

What cheer can be in thy dreadful toil, what
hope in the raging deep?
What joy from out their troubled voyage can
thy worn seamen reap?
Loosen thy close-reefed canvas, then, fling
wide thy pinions white,
Leap the long billows, swiftly sail into the
south's delight!

Steadfast she steers to the bitter north along the
horizon's rim,
Wasted and blurred by the cruel cold, dull,
ghostly, and pallid, and dim;

For grand are the will and courage of man,
and still she must keep her course,
And though she perish still must fight against
nature's terrible force.

S. E.

She passes up and down life's various ways
With noiseless footfall and with serious air:
Within the circle of her quiet days
She takes of sorrow and of joy her share.
In her bright home, like some rare jewel set,
The lustre of her beauty lives and glows,
With all the fragrance of the violet,
And all the radiant splendor of the rose.
As simple and unconscious as a flower,
And crowned with womanhood's most subtle charm,
She blesses her sweet realm with gentle power,
And keeps her hearth-fires burning clear and warm.
To know her is to love her. Every year
Makes her more precious and more wise and dear.

POOR LISETTE.

Sadly the quails in the cornland pipe,
Yellow the harvest is bending ripe,
Gayly the children each other greet,
Wandering down through the village street.

By her garden gate leans poor Lisette.
"Her lover," they whisper, "comes not yet."
She looks afar to the edge of the sky,
Where blue and misty the mountains lie.

What sudden echoes of fife and drum
Down the long, dim, winding valley come!
Oh, bring they news for the poor Lisette,
Rapture at last, or a life's regret?

High ring the bugle notes so sweet,
Nearer the rhythmic tramp of feet, —

What tempest rushes to clasp Lisette,
With lips so warm and with eyes so wet!

She is safe in her lover's arms at last;
A dreary dream is the wretched past,
The music of joy in her glad heart plays,
And morning dawns in her radiant face:

While clearly the quails in the cornland pipe,
And silent the harvest is bending ripe,
And the children shout to the fife and drum
That pain is over and peace is come.

TO J. G. W.

ON HIS SEVENTY-FIFTH BIRTHDAY.

WHAT is there left, I wonder,
To give thee on this glad day?
Vainly I muse and ponder;
What is there left to say?

There is winter abroad, and snow,
And winds that are chill and drear
Over the sad earth blow,
Like the sighs of the dying year.

But the land thou lovest is warm
At heart with the love of thee,
And breaks into bloom and charm
And fragrance, that thou mayest see.

Violet, laurel, and rose,
They are laid before thy feet,
And the red rose deeper glows
At a fate so proud and sweet.

Gifts and greeting and blessing,
Honor and praise, are thine;
There 's naught left worth expressing
By any word or sign!

So, like the rest, I offer
The gift all gifts above
That heaven or earth can proffer, —
Deep, gentle, grateful love.

IN TUSCANY.

Down San Miniato in the afternoon
Slowly we drove through still and golden air.
'T was winter, but the day was soft as June;
Florence was spread beneath us, passing fair.

The matchless city! Set about with flowers,
Peaceful along her Arno's banks she lay;
Her treasured splendors, roofs and domes and towers,
In tender light of the Italian day.

Sweet breathed the roses, glowing far and wide,
Pink, gold, and crimson; dark in stately gloom

Stood the thick cypresses; on every side
The laurestinus, rich with creamy bloom.

And exquisite, pale, sharp-leaved olives grew
In moonlight colors, silver-green and gray,
While, lifting their proud heads high in the blue,
Sprang the superb stone pines beside the way.

Oh, wonderful, I thought, beyond compare!
And hushed with pleasure silent sat and gazed,
When lo! a child's voice, and I grew aware
Of loveliness that left me all amazed.

A little beggar girl, that leaping came
Forth from the roadside, reaching out her hand,
And dancing like a bright and buoyant flame,
Besought us in the music of her land.

Her eyes were like a midnight full of stars
Below the dazzling beauty of her brows,
Her dusky hair dark as the cloud that bars
The moon in troubled skies when tempests rouse;

A mouth where lightning-sweet the sudden smile
Came, went and came, and flashed into my face,
And caught my heart, as, holding fast the while
The carriage edge, she ran with rapid grace.

Who could withstand her pleading, who resist
The magic of those love-compelling eyes,
Those lips the red pomegranate flowers had kissed,
The voice that charmed like woven melodies!

Not we! Surely, I thought, imperial blood,
Some priceless current from a kingly line,

Ran royal in her veins, — a sunny flood
That marked her with its fine, mysterious sign.

She was not born to ask, but to command;
She seemed to crown the wonder of the day,
The perfect blossom of that glorious land,
While her sweet "Grazie!" followed on our way,

As down 'mid olive, cypress, stately pine,
Among the roses in a dream we passed,
Through glamour of the time and place divine,
Till Arno's quiet banks were reached at last,

And pleasant rest. 'T is years since those fair hours,
But their rich memories live, their sun and shade,
Beautiful Florence set about with flowers,
And San Miniato's peerless beggar maid.

GOOD-BYE, SWEET DAY.

FOR MUSIC.

GOOD-BYE, sweet day, good-bye!
I have so loved thee, but I cannot hold thee.
Departing like a dream, the shadows fold thee;
Slowly thy perfect beauty fades away:
Good-bye, sweet day!

Good-bye, sweet day, good-bye!
Dear were thy golden hours of tranquil splendor,
Sadly thou yieldest to the evening tender
Who wert so fair from thy first morning ray:
Good-bye, sweet day!

Good-bye, sweet day, good-bye!
Thy glow and charm, thy smiles and tones and glances,

Vanish at last, and solemn night advances;
Ah, couldst thou yet a little longer stay!
Good-bye, sweet day!

Good-bye, sweet day, good-bye!
All thy rich gifts my grateful heart remembers,
The while I watch thy sunset's smouldering embers
Die in the west beneath the twilight gray.
Good-bye, sweet day!

IN AUTUMN.

THE aster by the brook is dead,
And quenched the golden-rod's brief fire;
The maple's last red leaf is shed,
And dumb the birds' sweet choir.

'T is life's November, too. How swift
The narrowing days speed, one by one!
How pale the waning sunbeams sift
Through clouds of gray and dun!

And as we lose our wistful hold
On warmth and loveliness and youth,
And shudder at the dark and cold,
Our souls cry out for Truth.

No more mirage, O Heavenly Powers,
To mock our sight with shows so fair!

We question of the solemn hours
That lead us swiftly — "Where?"

We hunger for our lost — in vain!
We lift our close-clasped hands above,
And pray God's pity on our pain,
And trust the Eternal Love.

WEST-WIND.

The barley bows from the west
Before the delicate breeze
That many a sail caressed
As it swept the sapphire seas.

It has found the garden sweet,
And the poppy's cup it sways;
Bends the golden ears of wheat;
And its dreamy touch it lays

On the heavy mignonette,
Stealing soft its odors fine,
On the pansies dewy yet,
On the phloxes red as wine.

Where the honeysuckle sweet
Storms the sunny porch with flowers,

Like a tempest of delight
Shaking fragrance down in showers,

It touches with airy grace
Each clustering, perfumed spray,
Clasps all in a light embrace,
And silently wanders away.

Come forth in the air divine,
Thou dearest, my crown of bliss!
Give that flower-sweet cheek of thine
To the morning breeze to kiss.

Add but thy perfect presence
To gladden my happy eyes,
And I would not change earth's morning
For the dawns of Paradise!

IMPATIENCE.

E. L.

Only to follow you, dearest, only to find you!
Only to feel for one instant the touch of your hand;
Only to tell you once of the love you left behind you, —
To say the world without you is like a desert of sand;

That the flowers have lost their perfume, the rose its splendor,
And the charm of nature is lost in a dull eclipse;
That joy went out with the glance of your eyes so tender,
And beauty passed with the lovely smile on your lips.

I did not dream it was you who kindled the morning
And folded the evening purple in peace so sweet;
But you took the whole world's rapture without a warning,
And left me naught save the print of your patient feet.

I count the days and the hours that hold us asunder:
I long for Death's friendly hand which shall rend in twain,
With the glorious lightning flash and the golden thunder,
These clouds of the earth, and give me my own again!

IN THE LANE.

By cottage walls the lilacs blow;
Rich spikes of perfume stand and sway
At open casements, where all day
The warm wind waves them to and fro.

Out of the shadow of the door,
Into the golden morning air,
Comes one who makes the day more fair
And summer sweeter than before.

The apple blossoms might have shed
Upon her cheek the bloom so rare;
The sun has kissed her bright brown hair
Braided about her graceful head.

Lightly betwixt the lilacs tall
She passes, through the garden gate,

Across the road, and stays to wait
A moment by the orchard wall;

And then in gracious light and shade,
Beneath the blossom-laden trees,
'Mid song of birds and hum of bees,
She strays, unconscious, unafraid,

Till swiftly o'er the grassy space
Comes one whose step she fain would stay.
Glad as the newly risen day
He stoops to read her drooping face.

Her face is like the morning skies,
Bright, timid, tender, blushing sweet;
She dares not trust her own to meet
The steady splendor of his eyes.

He holds her with resistless charm,
With truth, with power, with beauty crowned;
About her lovely shape is wound
The strong, safe girdle of his arm.

And up and down through shade and light
They wander through the flying hours,
And all the way is strewn with flowers,
And life looks like one long delight.

Ah, happy twain! No frost shall harm,
No change shall reach your bliss, so long
As keeps its place the faithful, strong,
Safe girdle of that folding arm.

Could you this simple secret know
No death in life would be to fear,
When you may watch, in some sad year,
By cottage walls the lilacs blow!

HER MIRROR.

O MIRROR, whence her lovely face
Was wont to look with radiance sweet,
Hast thou not kept of her some trace,
Some memory that thou mayest repeat?

Could I but find in thee once more
Some token of her presence dear!
O mirror, wilt thou not restore
Her shadow for an instant here?

Thou couldst not yield a boon so great.
I see my own dim face and eyes
With love and longing desolate,
All drowned in wistful memories.

Blindly for her dear hand I grope;
There 's nothing life can have in store
So sweet to me as this sweet hope,
To feel her smile on me once more!

FOR CHRISTMAS.

"THY own wish wish I thee in every place."
The Christmas joy, the song, the feast, the cheer,
Thine be the light of love in every face
That looks on thee, to bless thy coming year.

Thy own wish wish I thee. What dost thou crave?
All thy dear hopes be thine, whate'er they be.
A wish fulfilled may make thee king or slave;
I wish thee Wisdom's eyes wherewith to see.

Behold, she stands and waits, the youthful year!
A breeze of morning breathes about her brows;

She holds thy storm and sunshine, bliss and fear,
Blossom and fruit upon the bending boughs.

She brings thee gifts. What blessing wilt thou choose?
Life's crown of good in earth or heaven above,
The one immortal joy thou canst not lose,
Is Love! Leave all the rest, and choose thou Love!

AT SET OF MOON.

The wind blows from the stormy quarter and
the moon is old.
Trouble has gathered in the sky so pallid,
dim, and cold.
Can this be morning? Is the world so blank
and out of tune?
Down yonder dim horizon something fades be-
side the moon.

What is it? 'T is the ghost of joy that made
the earth so sweet;
Life's one supreme, bright happiness, that
hastes with flying feet.
The fading moon will brighten soon, in splen-
dor shine again,
But joy that was the life of life is merged in
bitter pain.

Last night I passed her window: she dreamed
not I was near.
One ray slipped through the jealous curtain,
rosy-warm and clear;
I kissed the flowers on which it fell, all dewy
cold were they.
With patient anguish in my heart I turned
and stole away.

She will not miss me, will not know if I am
here or there;
If I am dead, or if I live, will neither know
nor care.
Death is not bitter as my grief, which craves
one single boon, —
Release me, God! let my life fade like yonder
waning moon.

MY GARDEN.

It blossomed by the summer sea,
  A tiny space of tangled bloom
  Wherein so many flowers found room,
A miracle it seemed to be!

Up from the ground, alert and bright,
  The pansies laughed in gold and jet,
  Purple and pied, and mignonette
Breathed like a spirit of delight.

Flaming the rich nasturtiums ran
  Along the fence, and marigolds
  "Opened afresh their starry folds"
In beauty as the day began;

While ranks of scarlet poppies gay
  Waved when the soft south wind did blow,

Superb in sunshine, to and fro,
Like soldiers proud in brave array.

And tall blue larkspur waved its spikes
Against the sea's deep violet,
That every breeze makes deeper yet
With splendid azure where it strikes;

And rosy-pale sweet-peas climbed up,
And phloxes spread their colors fine,
Pink, white, and purple, red as wine,
And fire burned in the eschscholtzia's cup.

More dear to me than words can tell
Was every cup and spray and leaf;
Too perfect for a life so brief,
Seemed every star and bud and bell.

And many a maiden, fairer yet,
Came smiling to my garden gay,
Whose graceful head I decked alway
With pansy and with mignonette.

Such slender shapes of girlhood young
Haunted that little blooming space,
Each with a more delightful face
Than any flower that ever sprung!

O shadowy shapes of youthful bloom!
How fair the sweet procession glides
Down memory's swift and silent tides,
Till lost in doubtful mists of gloom!

Year after year new flowers unfold,
Year after year fresh maidens fair,
Scenting their perfume on the air,
Follow and find their red and gold.

And while for them the poppies' blaze
I gather, brightening into mine
The eyes of vanished beauty shine,
That gladdened long-lost summer days.

Where are they all who wide have ranged?
Where are the flowers of other years?

What ear the wistful question hears?
Ah, some are dead and all are changed.

And still the constant earth renews
Her treasured splendor; still unfold
Petals of purple and of gold
Beneath the sunshine and the dews.

But for her human children dear
Whom she has folded to her breast,
No beauty wakes them from their rest,
Nor change they with the changing year.

LOST AND SAVED.

"O Love," he whispered low, "Eternal Love!"
And softly twilight's shadows round them drew,
And one by one the stars grew bright above,
And warm airs from the gates of sunset blew.

Swift o'er the summer sea they lightly sailed;
The rushing winds, the rushing waves, sang sweet;
But sweeter than all sounds the voice that failed,
Shaken by the full heart that strongly beat.

Fast piled the clouds in darkness south and east,
Each other's starry eyes they only saw.

What was the world to them? The breeze increased,
And caught the glimmering sail with gusty flaw.

Low stooped the mast; the firm hand at the helm
Held bravely yet the light craft to its course,
Though hurrying breakers fain would overwhelm,
And the gale gathered with resistless force.

Black night, black storm, that rose in sudden wrath!
All lost the cheerful stars forgot to burn,
And death was waiting silent in the path,
Along whose wavering way was no return.

Or life or death — what mattered it to them?
Locked mute and still within each other's arms,

They sought no more the tempest's rage to
stem,
Deaf to the tumult of the night's alarms.

Beyond their fate uplifted, death was naught,
Nor could they know, borne safe all pain
above,
Into immortal life together caught,
That only thus should live Eternal Love!

A ROSE OF JOY.

FOR A BETROTHAL.

As when one wears a fragrant rose
  Close to the heart, a rose most fair,
And while the day's life onward flows
  Forgets that it is fastened there,

And wonders what delicious charm
  Dwells in the air about, and whence
Come the rich wafts of perfume warm
  Subtly saluting soul and sense;

And then, remembering what it is,
  Bends smiling eyes the flower above,
Adores its beauty and its bliss
  And looks on it with grateful love —

Even so I wear, O friend of mine,
The sweet thought of your happiness;
The knowledge of your joy divine
Is fragrant with a power to bless.

With the day's work preoccupied
Vaguely, half conscious of delight,
Upborne as on a buoyant tide,
I wonder why life seems so bright.

Then memory speaks; then winter gray
And age and cares that have no end
Touch me no more. I am to-day
Rich in the wealth that cheers my friend.

IN SEPTEMBER.

Leaping from the boat, through the lazy, sparkling surf,
Up the slope we press, o'er the rich, elastic turf.
Heavy waves the golden-rod in the morning breeze,
Swift spring the startled grasshoppers, thick about our knees.

Look, how shines the distance! Leagues of water blue,
Wind-swept, sunshine-flooded, with a flying sail or two,
Gleaming white as silver, and dreaming, here and there,
A snowy-breasted gull floats in the golden air.

How sweet to climb together the scented, flowery slope,
O dearest, hand in hand, like children following hope;
Laughing at the grasshoppers, singing with delight,
Only to be alive this September morning bright!

But where would be the beauty of this brilliant atmosphere
Wert thou away, my darling? Would not the sky be drear,
And gray the living azure of the changing, sparkling sea?
And blossoms, birds, and sails, and clouds — what would they be to me?

Rest we here a little upon the breezy height,
And watch the play of color, the shadow, and the light,

And let the lovely moment overflow us with
its bliss.
When shall we find another so beautiful as
this?

I turn from all the splendor to those clear
eyes of thine,
That watch the shimmering sails on the far
horizon line;
While sun and wind salute thy cheek till roses
blossom there,
Thou golden creature, than the morn a thou-
sand times more fair!

Ah! must it end? Must winter hurl its snow
across the sea,
And roar with leagues of bitterness between
thy face and me?
Must chill December fill with murk and storm
this wooing air,
And the west wind wail like the voice of some
supreme despair?

Too surely! But, O friendly eyes, hold summer safe for me;
Only, O gentle heart, keep warm and sweet my memory;
And no fury of the tempest my world can desolate —
This wingèd joy will lift my soul above the storms of fate.

UNDER THE EAVES.

Pleasant above the city's din
My quiet room beneath the eaves;
The first to see the day begin,
The last the sunshine lingering leaves.

Pleasant upon the window pane
Uplifted high, so near the sky,
To hear the patter of the rain,
Or see the snow go swirling by;

To watch the gilded weather-cocks
In every eddy turn and wheel;
To hear the clear, melodious shocks
Of chiming bells that clang and peal.

Dove-haunted roofs and towers and spires
The friendly faces of the clocks.

The network of electric wires,
The sparrows gossiping in flocks,

The smoke's dim, ragged phantoms soft
From myriad chimneys lightly curled,
That mingle with the clouds aloft
Slow sailing with the sailing world —

Pleasant and peaceful all. Most sweet
When morning and when evening fires,
Silent above the busy street,
Touch the dove-haunted roofs and spires.

Neighbored by sparrow and by dove,
A comrade of the weather-cocks,
My quiet, airy perch I love,
The chimney-stacks, the city clocks;

And thank the heavens that bend above
For leave to find such deep delight
In tower and spire and fluttering dove,
Color and cloud and sparrow's flight.

NOVEMBER MORNING.

With clamor the wild southwester
  Through the wide heaven is roaring,
Ploughing the ocean, and over
  The earth its fury outpouring.

Lo, how the vast gray spaces
  Wrestle and roll and thunder,
Billow piled upon billow,
  Closing and tearing asunder,

As if the deep raged with the anger
  Of hosts of the fabulous kraken!
And the firm house shudders and trembles,
  Beaten, buffeted, shaken.

Battles the gull with the tempest,
  Struggling and wavering and faltering,

Soaring and striving and sinking,
Turning, its high course altering.

Down through the cloudy heaven
Notes from the wild geese are falling;
Cries like harsh bell-tones are ringing,
Echoing, clanging, and calling.

Plunges the schooner landward,
Swiftly the long seas crossing,
Close-reefed, seeking the harbor,
Half lost in the spray she is tossing.

A rift in the roof of vapor!
And stormy sunshine is streaming
To color the gray, wild water
Like chrysoprase, green and gleaming.

Cold and tempestuous ocean,
Ragged rock, brine-swept and lonely,
Grasp of the long, bitter winter —
These things to gladden me only!

Love, dost thou wait for me in some rich land
Where the gold orange hangs in odorous calm?
Where the clear waters kiss the flowery strand,
Bordered with shining sand and groves of palm?

And while this bitter morning breaks for me,
Draws to its close thy warm, delicious day;
Lights, colors, perfumes, music, joy, for thee,
For me the cold, wild sea, the cloudy gray!

Rises the red moon in thy tranquil sky,
Plashes the fountain with its silver talk,
And as the evening wind begins to sigh,
Thy sweet girl's shape steals down the garden walk.

And through the scented dusk a white robe gleams,
Lingering beneath the starry jasmine sprays,

Till where thy clustered roses breathe in dreams,
A sudden gush of song thy light step stays.

That was the nightingale! O Love of mine,
Hear'st thou my voice in that pathetic song,
Throbbing in passionate cadences divine,
Sinking to silence with its rapture strong?

I stretch my arms to thee through all the cold,
Through all the dark, across the weary space
Between us, and thy slender form I fold,
And gaze into the wonder of thy face.

Pure brow the moonbeam touches, tender eyes
Splendid with feeling, delicate smiling mouth,
And heavy silken hair that darkly lies
Soft as the twilight clouds in thy sweet South.

O beautiful my Love! In vain I seek
To hold the heavenly dream that fades from me.
I needs must wake with salt spray on my cheek,
Flung from the fury of this northern sea.

IN DEATH'S DESPITE.

Whither departs the perfume of the rose?
Into what life dies music's golden sound?
Year after year life's long procession goes
To hide itself beneath the senseless ground.
Upon the grave's inexorable brink
Amazed with loss the human creature stands;
Vainly he strives to reason or to think,
Left with his aching heart and empty hands;
He calls his lost in vain. In sorrow drowned,
Darkness and silence all his sense confound.

Till in Death's roll-call stern he hears his name,
In turn he follows and is lost to sight;

Though comforted by love and crowned by
fame,
He hears the summons dread no man may
slight.
Sweetly and clear upon his quiet grave
The birds shall sing, unmindful of his dust;
Softly in turn the long green grass shall
wave
Over his fallen head. In turn he must
Submit to be forgotten, like the rest,
Though high the heart that beat within his
breast.

The rose falls and the music's sound is gone;
Dear voices cease and clasp of loving hands;
Alone we stand when the brief day is done,
Searching with saddened eyes earth's dark-
ening lands.
Worthless as is the lightest fallen leaf
We seem, yet constant as the night's first
star

Kindles our deathless hope, and from our grief
Is born the trust no misery can mar,
That Love shall lift us all despair above,
Shall conquer death, — yea, Love, and only Love!

A SONG OF HOPE.

THE morning breaks, the storm is past. Behold!
Along the west the lift grows bright, — the sea
Leaps sparkling blue to catch the sunshine's gold,
And swift before the breeze the vapors flee.

Light cloud-flocks white that troop in joyful haste
Up and across the pure and tender sky;
Light laughing waves that dimple all the waste
And break upon the rocks and hurry by!

Flying of sails, of clouds, a tumult sweet,
Wet, tossing buoys, a warm wild wind that blows
The pennon out and rushes on to greet
Thy lovely cheek and heighten its soft rose!

Beloved, beloved! Is there no morning breeze
To clear our sky and chase our mists away,
Like this great air that sweeps the freshening seas,
And wakes the old sad world to glad new day?

Sweeter than morning, stronger than the gale,
Deeper than ocean, warmer than the sun,
My love shall climb, shall claim thee, shall prevail
Against eternal darkness, dearest one!

OUR SOLDIERS.

Peace smiles over hamlet and city,
  Peace broods over mountain and stream,
Our tears of anguish and pity
  Are a half-forgotten dream.
The tempest of battle is ended,
  And our dear, delivered land
Stands free in the sunshine splendid,
  No stain upon her hand.

What shall we do to honor
  Her dauntless sons to-day,
Who shed such glory upon her,
  Striking her chains away?
Fair floats the banner o'er her, —
  What did not her children give?
They cast their lives before her,
  Dying that she might live.

Remember them, praise them, love them,
The noble hearts and brave!
May earth lie lightly above them
In many a nameless grave.
Great was their high endeavor,
Great is their glorious meed;
Honor our heroes forever,
Praise them with word and deed!

TWO.

She turned the letter's rustling page; her smile
Made bright the air about her while she read:
"I come to you to-morrow, love; meanwhile
Love me, my sweet," he said.

"What other business has my life?" she thought,
And musing passed, as in some happy dream,
To the day's care and toils, and while she wrought
Time winged with light did seem.

To-morrow! When the summer morning broke
In rose and gold, and touched her slumbering eyes

Softly, with tempered splendor, and she woke
To the rich dawn's surprise,

Birds sang aloft and roses bloomed below;
Flushed wide the tender fleecy mists above;
Came Memory, leading Hope, and whispered low,
"Love me! I come, my love."

"So that thou comest," she thought, "skies may grow gray,
The sun may fade, the sea with foam blanch white,
Tempest and thunder dread may spoil the day,
But not my deep delight."

O sweet and awful Love! O power supreme,
Mighty and sacred, terrible art thou;
Beside thee Life and Death are but a dream,
Before thee all must bow.

When in the west the sunset's crimson flame
Burned low and wasted, and the cool winds blew,
Watching the steadfast sky she heard her name
Breathed in the voice she knew.

Joy shook her heart, nor would its pulse be stilled;
Her fair cheek borrowed swift the sunset's bloom.
A presence beautiful and stately filled
The silence of the room.

"Hast thou no word of welcome?" for indeed
Like some mute marble goddess proud stood she;
She turned. "O king of men!" she cried, "what need
That I should welcome thee?"

Her eyes divine beneath her solemn brows
Met his clear gaze and measured strength for strength.
She drooped, as to the sun the lily bows,
Into his arms at length.

Wide swung heaven's gates for them; no more they knew.
The silent stars looked in, they saw them not.
The slow winds wandered soft through dusk and dew,
But earth was all forgot.

COMPENSATION.

In that new world toward which our feet are
set,
Shall we find aught to make our hearts forget
Earth's homely joys and her bright hours of
bliss?
Has heaven a spell divine enough for this?
For who the pleasure of the spring shall tell,
When on the leafless stalk the brown buds
swell,
When the grass brightens and the days grow
long,
And little birds break out in rippling song?

O sweet the dropping eve, the blush of morn,
The starlit sky, the rustling fields of corn,
The soft airs blowing from the freshening
seas,

The sun-flecked shadow of the stately trees,
The mellow thunder and the lulling rain,
The warm, delicious, happy summer rain,
When the grass brightens and the days grow long,
And little birds break out in rippling song!

O beauty manifold, from morn till night,
Dawn's flush, noon's blaze, and sunset's tender light!
O fair, familiar features, changes sweet
Of her revolving seasons, storm and sleet
And golden calm, as slow she wheels through space
From snow to roses, — and how dear her face
When the grass brightens and the days grow long,
And little birds break out in rippling song!

O happy Earth! O home so well beloved!
What recompense have we, from thee removed?
One hope we have that overtops the whole, —

The hope of finding every vanished soul
We love and long for daily, and for this
Gladly we turn from thee and all thy bliss,
Even at thy loveliest, when the days are long,
And little birds break out in rippling song.

SONNET.

Back from life's coasts the ebbing tide had drawn,
The singing tide that brimmed with joy the shore:
The torch of sunset and the blush of dawn
Seemed to have lost their glow forevermore,
There was such silence in the empty sky!
And Nature mocked me, grown so cold and dumb,
And Faith, I thought, had perished utterly,
Nor knew I whence a ray of hope should come;
When, like a royal messenger of good
Sent to some sad and famine-stricken land,
Across my threshold dark you passed, and stood,
Bearing the keys of heaven in your hand;
And wide the bright, resounding gates you threw!
Tell me, O friend, what I shall do for you!

JOY.

Joy breathes in the sweet airs of spring,
And in the shy wild blossom hides,
And soars upon the swallow's wing,
And with the singing water glides.

Where lilies stand, a fragrant crowd,
Rocked by the warm south wind he lies;
And dreams upon the balmy cloud
Soft floating in the tender skies:

Shines clear from out the crescent sharp,
Glittering above the sunset's red,
And of the west wind makes a harp,
And gleams in starlight overhead:

Joy mantles in the golden wine,
Joy to earth's humblest doth descend,
And looks at me with cheer divine
From out the dear eyes of my friend.

BELOVED.

A STRONG sweet tide toward the lonely shore
Sets steadfastly, till every inlet sings,
And to the waiting silence, blank before,
Its full refreshment brings.

Through the day's business passing to and fro,
Ever she grows more conscious of the charm
Upholding her wherever she may go,
Like some enfolding arm.

For this dear joy all days more fair do seem,
The night's repose more blissful and more deep,
As pillowed on the breast of this sweet dream
Softly she falls asleep.

Safe is she, lifted all earth's ills above;
No storm can break her calm, no evil reach
Within the charmed circle drawn by Love,
Blest beyond thought or speech.

O maiden, dream thy dream! Life's crown of thorns,
Draws it not down, unseen, about thy brows?
The glory of thy summer eves and morns
Stern winter shall espouse.

Within this Eden of thy sweet content
No mortal stays, — that, the great gods forbid;
But canst thou learn that in thy banishment
A higher good lies hid?

THE ANSWER.

The blossoms blush on the bough,
And the air is full of song,
Oh give me my answer now,
Dear Love, I have waited long!

The blossoms mantle and flush, —
I see but the rose in your cheek, —
And the birds their music hush,
For the fate your lips may speak.

I listen for life or death,
With hope's deep rapture stirred,
And faint as the blossoms' breath
Comes your low, delicious word.

And the earth reels under my feet, —
O blossoms that burn on the bough!
With the strength of a joy so sweet,
For I have my answer now!

WILD GEESE.

A FAR, strange sound through the night,
A dauntless and resolute cry,
Clear in the tempest's despite,
Ringing so wild and so high!

Darkness and tumult and dread,
Rain and the battling of gales,
Yet cleaving the storm overhead,
The wedge of the wild geese sails.

Pushing their perilous way,
Buffeted, beaten, and vexed;
Steadfast by night and by day,
Weary, but never perplexed;

Sure that the land of their hope
Waits beyond tempest and dread,

Sure that the dark where they grope
  Shall glow with the morning red!

Clangor that pierces the storm
  Dropped from the gloom of the sky!
I sit by my hearth-fire warm
  And thrill to that purposeful cry.

Strong as a challenge sent out,
  Rousing the timorous heart
To battle with fear and with doubt,
  Courageously bearing its part.

O birds in the wild, wild sky!
  Would I could so follow God's way
Through darkness, unquestioning why,
  With only one thought — to obey!

SONG.

Past the point and by the beach,
Oh but the waves ran merrily,
With laughter light and silver speech,
And red the sunset flushed the sea.

Two lovers wandered side by side,
Oh but the waves ran merrily, —
They watched the rushing of the tide,
And fairer than a dream was she.

About her slender waist was cast,
Oh but the waves ran merrily, —
His strong right arm that held her fast,
A zone that clasped her royally.

He gazed in her bewildering face,
Oh but the waves ran merrily, —

"See how the waves each other chase!
So follow all my thoughts to thee."

"And seest thou yonder star?" she said,
Oh but the waves ran merrily, —
"Superb in yonder evening-red?
So dost thou light my life for me!"

'T was long ago that star did shine,
Oh but the waves ran merrily, —
Love made for them the world divine
In that old time beside the sea.

The soft wind sighs, the great sea rolls,
Oh but the waves run merrily, —
What has Time done with those two souls?
And Love who charmed them, — where is he?

AUGUST.

Buttercup nodded and said good-by,
Clover and daisy went off together,
But the fragrant water-lilies lie
Yet moored in the golden August weather.

The swallows chatter about their flight,
The cricket chirps like a rare good fellow,
The asters twinkle in clusters bright,
While the corn grows ripe and the apples mellow.

SONG.

A BIRD upon a rosy bough
  Sang low and long, sang late and loud,
Until the young moon's silver prow
  Was lost behind a bar of cloud.

The south wind paused and held its breath —
  Sing loud and late, sing low and long,
While sweet as Love and sad as Death,
  The matchless notes rose wild and strong.

They rang with rapture, loss and change —
  Sing low and late, sing long and loud,
A tumult passionate and strange,
  A speechless grief, a patience proud;

Till with "farewell for evermore," —
Sing late and loud, sing low and long,
Like waves that kiss a barren shore
In sobbing cadence died the song.

OH TELL ME NOT OF HEAVENLY HALLS.

Oh tell me not of heavenly halls,
Of streets of pearl and gates of gold,
Where angel unto angel calls
'Mid splendors of the sky untold;

My homesick heart would backward turn
To find this dear, familiar earth,
To watch its sacred hearth-fires burn,
To catch its songs of joy or mirth.

I'd lean from out the heavenly choir
To hear once more the red cock crow,
What time the morning's rosy fire
O'er hill and field began to glow.

To hear the ripple of the rain,
The summer waves at ocean's brim,

To hear the sparrow sing again
I 'd quit the wide-eyed cherubim!

I care not what heaven's glories are;
Content am I. More joy it brings
To watch the dandelion's star
Than mystic Saturn's golden rings.

And yet — and yet, O dearest one!
My comfort from life's earliest breath,
To follow thee where thou art gone
Through those dim, awful gates of Death,

To find thee, feel thy smile again,
To have eternity's long day
To tell my grateful love, — why, then,
Both heaven and earth might pass away!

MIDSUMMER.

White as a blossom is the kerchief quaint
  Over her sumptuous shoulders lightly laid;
Fairer than any picture men could paint,
  In the cool orchard's fragrant light and shade

She stands and waits: some pensive dream enfolds
  Her beauty sweet, and bows her radiant head;
The delicate pale roses that she holds
  Seem to have borrowed of her cheek their red.

She waits like some superb but drooping flower
  To feel the touch of morning and the sun,

And o'er her head the glowing petals shower,
And to her feet the shifting sunbeams run.

I follow to her feet their pathway fine,
And while my voice the charmèd silence breaks,
What startled splendors from her deep eyes shine!
Into what glory my rich flower awakes!

NEW YEAR SONG.

O Sorrow, go thy way and leave me!
Weary am I of thee, thou Sorrow old.
Unclasp thy hand from mine and cease to grieve me,
Fade like the winter sunset dim and cold.

Depart, and trouble me no longer!
Die! Vanish with forgotten yesterdays.
Eastward the darkness melts, the light grows stronger,
And dawn breaks sweet across the shrouding haze.

Die and depart, Old Year, old Sorrow!
Welcome, O morning air of health and strength!

O glad New Year, bring us new hope to-morrow,
With blossom, leaf, and fruitage bright at length.

CAPTURED.

Nanette!
Can you not teach me to forget?
It is so hard to understand!
You would not lift your slender hand
To keep me yours, yet must I be
Yours only, yours eternally,
Though 'neath the chain I strive and fret,
Nanette!
That golden hour when first we met,
Like the swift inundating sea
Love's tide swept in and conquered me.
Love uttered Love's supremest word,
A moment you were touched and stirred;
Ah, that 's the anguish of regret,
Nanette!
My every thought on you was set;
I poured for you Love's priceless wine,

You could no more its power divine
Than one small blossom's cup of gold
The boundless firmament could hold:
My eyes with scornful tears are wet
Nanette!
This withered spray of mignonette
You gave me, from my heart I take,
This sick, sad heart you taught to ache,
And fling it in the restless sea —
I would my thought of you could be
So flung away from me; and yet
Nanette!
I cannot break the cruel net,
Though I may curse my fate and swear
You are not kind, nor good, nor fair,
You'll hold me by one silken tress,
Or eyelid's down-dropped loveliness,
A touch of hand, or tone of voice,
Or smile that all my will destroys:
Ah Heaven! the only boon I crave
Is rest, the silence of the grave.
Release me! Teach me to forget,
Nanette!

FAITH.

Fain would I hold my lamp of life aloft
Like yonder tower built high above the reef;
Steadfast, though tempests rave or winds blow soft,
Clear, though the sky dissolve in tears of grief.

For darkness passes, storms shall not abide:
A little patience and the fog is past.
After the sorrow of the ebbing tide
The singing flood returns in joy at last.

The night is long and pain weighs heavily,
But God will hold His world above despair.
Look to the East, where up the lucid sky
The morning climbs! The day shall yet be fair!

AT DAWN.

Early this morning waking,
I heard the sandpipers call,
And the sea on the shore was breaking
With a dreamy rise and fall.

The dawn that was softly blushing
Touched cloud and wave with rose,
And the sails in the west were flushing,
No breeze stirred their repose.

What tone in the water's falling
Had reached me while I dreamed?
What sound in the wild birds' calling
Like a heavenly greeting seemed?

What meant the delicate splendor
That brightened the conscious morn

With a radiance fresh and tender
Crowning the day newborn?

All nature's musical voices
Whispered, "Awake and see!
Awake, for the day rejoices!"
What news had the morn for me?

Then I remembered the blessing
So sweet, O friend, so near!
The joy beyond all expressing, —
To-day you would be here.

IN A HORSE-CAR.

I WONDERED what power possessed the place
As I took my seat in the motley crowd,
And glancing swiftly from face to face
Of the poor and mean, and the rich and proud,

And all the stages betwixt the two
That daily travel the iron track,
I stopped at a young face fresh as dew,
Framed in white with a hood of black.

'T was a little Sister of Charity;
Oh young and slender, oh sweet and calm!
Like a pensive moonbeam pale was she,
With her fair hands folded palm to palm.

And a delicate beauty of high repose,
A sacred peace, as if far withdrawn
From the hard world's din, like a cloistered rose,
She blossomed pure as the breath of dawn.

I marveled much how a girl like this,
In her Maytime splendor could turn away
From the brimming cup of her youth's bright bliss,
To succor the sorrowful day by day.

And yet when I looked at her once more,
With her lofty aspect of tempered cheer,
All the joys of the earth seemed vain and poor
To the lovely record written here.

And I felt how true it is, how sure
That every good deed adds a light
To the human face, not there before,
While every ill thing leaves its blight.

It does not follow that women and men
Must live in a cloister to work for God;
There's enough to do, to the dullest ken,
In the great world's paths spread wide abroad.

And the good or ill of the life we lead
Is sculptured clear on the countenance;
Be it love and goodness, or sin and greed,
Who runs may read at a single glance.

A VALENTINE.

What is the whole world worth, Dear,
Weighed against love and truth?
Sweet is the spring to the earth, Dear,
Bright is the blossom of youth:

And the skies of summer are tender
In fullness of life and strength,
And rich is the autumn splendor,
But winter comes at length.

Tell me, what spell shall charm us
When the golden days expire?
What is there left to warm us
Save Love's most sacred fire?

While on the soul's high altar
Its clear light burns secure,

Though the step of joy may falter,
And the glad years are no more,

The frosts of age are naught, Dear!
I clasp thy hand in mine
Fondly as when youth sought, Dear,
To be thy Valentine.

WITHIN AND WITHOUT.

The tide flows up, the tide flows down:
The water brims the creek and falls;
A cottage weather-stained and brown
Lifts at the brink its time-worn walls.

Beneath the lowly window sill
Two little beds of blossoms gay
The wandering airs with fragrance fill,
Sweeten the night and charm the day.

The tide flows up, the tide flows down:
From the low window's humble square
A woman in a faded gown,
With care-dimmed eyes and tangled hair,

Looks out across the smiling space
Where golden suns and stars unfold:

Blue larkspur, the pied pansy's face,
Nasturtium bells of scarlet bold, —

She sees them not, nor cares, nor knows.
A man's rough figure noon and night
And morning o'er the threshold goes, —
No sense has he for their delight.

The tide flows up, the tide flows down:
In that dull house a little maid
Lives lonely, under Fortune's frown,
A life unchildlike and afraid.

To her that tiny garden-plot
Means heaven. She comes at eve to stand
'Mid mallow and forget-me-not
And marigolds on either hand.

They look at her with brilliant eyes,
Their scent is greeting and caress;
They spread their rich and glowing dyes
Her saddened soul to cheer and bless.

The tide flows up, the tide flows down:
Within, how base the life and poor!
Without, what wealth and beauty crown
The humble flowers beside the door!

BETROTHED.

Softly the flickering firelight comes and goes;
The warm glow flashes, sinks, departs, returns,
And shows me where the delicate red rose
In the tall, slender vase of crystal burns.

The tempest beats without. The hush within
Is sweeter for the turmoil of the night;
Ice clatters at the pane and snow-flakes spin
A web of woven storm, a shroud of white.

Its secret the wild winter weather keeps,
No sound transpires except the tempest's breath;
Locked in the frost the muffled pathway sleeps,
For any human token still as death.

My eyes the room's familiar aspect hold,
Its quiet beauty and its sumptuous gloom,
Its glimmering draperies of dull rich gold,
The gleam upon the burnished peacock's plume.

My rose, my book, my work, I see them all,
With my whole soul surrendered to one sense,
My life within my ears, for one footfall
Listening with patience breathless and intense.

'T is my heart hears, at last, the silent door
Swing on its hinges, there 's no need the fire
Should show me whose step thrills the conscious floor,
As suddenly the wayward flame leaps higher.

Thou comest, bringing all good things that are!

Infinite joy, and peace with white wings furled,
All heaven is here and thou the morning-star,
Thou splendor of my life! "Thou Day o' the world!"

QUESTIONS.

The steadfast planet spins through space,
And into darkness, into light
Swiftly it wheels its living face,
"'T is day," we say, or "It is night."

And we who cling and with it turn,
Till spent is our brief span of years,
Watching our sister stars that burn
Through the dim trouble of our tears,

We question of the silence vast,
Of souls that people distant spheres;
What of their future and their past?
Have they our sorrows, joys, and fears?

Do the same flowers make glad their sight?
The same birds sing? On their great seas

Do ships like ours, with canvas white,
Move stately, answering to the breeze?

Have they their Christ, their Christmas Day?
Know they Mahomet? Buddha? One,
Or all or none? And do they pray?
And have they wrought as we have done?

We cannot guess, 't is hard indeed,
Our own orb's tale of its dim past
Through centuries untold to read,
And who its future shall forecast?

We only know it keeps its place,
An atom in the universe,
As through the awful realms of space
The mighty hosts of stars disperse.

We know the hand that holds in check
The whirling worlds, each in its course,
And saves the universe from wreck
And peril, this tremendous Force

Holds likewise all our little lives;
The suns and stars do all obey
His bidding, never planet strives
To swerve from its appointed way.

The dangerous boon alone to us
Is given, — to choose 'twixt ill and well,
Rebellion or obedience, — thus
To build our heaven, or dig our hell.

But one great thought our strength upholds;
Nothing shall perish! Though His rod
Smites sore, His mercy still enfolds
His own, God's souls are safe with God.

R9-CSD-026